3i Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1936) 1962
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581 [589] like their loin cloth and *möbua*, every one has a 'light' in his house.

With the abundant freedom in social intercourse such as these tribes enjoy, their marriages are generally 582 love-marriages. The proper age for marriage is now twenty years for the lad, and after puberty for the girl in Mayurbhanj. In the past, Santals married [177] adult (about their twenty-fifth year) to men or women of choice ; but now, undoubtedly due to the influence of the neighbouring Hindus, the age for matrimony has come down so as even to infringe the age of consent. Child-marriages are more frequent in Mayurbhanj. Brides, however, must be younger than the husbands but we cannot recall having seen or heard of a wife older than the husband.

595 The tribe does not favour polygamy, unless the wife is barren. The younger brother marries the widow of his elder brother to keep the family property intact. In Mayurbhanj, however, several instances of a man's subsidiary wives came to our knowledge, enjoying a status in law and in the society, exactly equal to their *Mitakshòra* sisters. No 595 instances of a polyandrous system could be directly • 835 met with, but the institution known as *Dhàulià Sagai*, which permits a younger brother to share his elder brother's wife with impunity, "only they must not go about it very openly," has puzzled the

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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majority of Santal sociologists into thinking that fraternal polyandry may have once existed amongst the tribe. A corresponding custom is noticed which permits a wife to admit her younger sister into intimate relations with her husband, and if untoward consequences follow, the scandal is avoided by a formal marriage, *Hirom Cetan* (marriage while a co-wife exists).[a]

1. *Orthodox Marriage*

Various kinds of marriages are permitted by the tribe. Now we shall discuss the ceremonials attending them. The first form that deserves mention is the regular marriage, called *Asli* or *Duar Itut Sindur Bapla* in Mayurbhanj. It is the same as what Risley mentions as "*Bapla* or *Kering Bàbu*," literally "bride-purchase," or what Dr. Campbell names as "*Kiriñ Bàbu Bapla*." This system, the most orthodox, is really a marriage arranged by the elders of the family, without necessarily an element of pre-marital love between the couple.

Selection of Bride

Now, suppose a householder wants a suitable bride for his son, he will have a confidential chat with some of his friends about the suitable girls of

a. Risley, *People of India*, App. VIII.

3: Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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Mare," played with a wealth of detail as noted by Father Elwin in his "The Baiga." The juvenile games, indulged in by Santal children, resulting in sex-contacts and childish coitus are done openly. But, as Santal parents interfere in such games and chide the children while playing sexually, coitus is sometimes secretly indulged in. So it is that some Santals told us that children play sex-games privately and not before public gaze.

We should note that there are further equipments to the phallic knowledge of the Santals other than occasional glimpses of parental coitus or coitus generally seen after the Lagre*n* dances. A well-informed Santal told us that *Gòṛòmbaba*, (the grandfather of Santal children), the *teñae* (brother-in-law) or the Kumañ (father's sister's husband) explain the mysteries of sex to children of four to five years of age with occasional demonstration of process how to indulge in coitus. There are various other ways of initiation. Boys and girls sometimes understand the mysteries on mutual consultation about the supreme fact. Sometimes, old women teach the art to young girls and elder men to inexperienced lads. Even elder women, according to reliable testimony, belonging of course to the *ràṇḍi* (widow) and *chardi* (divorcee) class, teach the art to boys of 14 and 15. But to sexually inexperienced boys, the *gurn* par excellence is the *bili* (elder brother's wife) with

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whom sexual intimacies are permitted or connived at in Santal customary law. There is a folk-song (quoted later) of the Santals, a Bir Sereñ (song during hunting) in which such a sister-in-law is explaining the mysteries of cohabitation to her novice husband's younger brother. Another song, also referring to intimacies with the elder brother's wife, perhaps records a second stage when the lad has become emboldened:

Koṛa: Dèsè hili ho koṛam toa te,
Tidò hili ho rakap' tiñ me.
Kuṛi: Tidò babu jaiñ rakap' ketamge
Pale babu ja sakòm saḍe tiñ,
Pale babu ja paini saḍe tiñ,
Pale babu ja dadam babu ja
Dadam babu jae dhòra laṅ.
Koṛa: Bàndi huṛu baṅse hili ho
Saika huṛu baṅse hili ho
Dadaiñ hili ho chindoè ñelà ho.

(Translated)

Boy: O, sister-in-law, do please put my hand on your breasts (on the chest) O, sister-in-law (please) raise my hand.

Girl: O boy, I could put your hand on my breasts,
But should my bracelets ring by chance?
If my anklets ring by chance?
If by chance, your brother catches us, O boy!
If by chance, your brother catches us?
(What will happen then?)

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Boy: It is not paddy, tied in a cloth,
Or paddy stored in baskets, O dear;
What will be the sign to know things from?

There is, however, no customary initiation into the mysteries of sex, as making the boys "*bunsiar*" noted by Father Elwin in the case of the Baiga, or "Chalak kora" as one hears in Birbhum rural parlance, when boys are said to be sent to fairs to be sexually experienced.

Added to all these, there is the undisputed fact that boys and girls are used by young men and women freely in their love-affairs and intrigues as mediums to send presents of *handia* (rice-beer) to the lover or *ukhra* (fried paddy) or articles of toilet to the beloved. Very frequently, children thus act as go-betweens in adult love-making and become very helpful in the conduct of affairs in hills and jungles, and naturally enough, as they grow up, they (children) get accustomed to love themselves and come to relish the flavour of such adventures.

It will be clear from the above, how the sex-instinct is developed in children and, although, in the dawn, the manifestations are more or less unconscious, sexual consciousness is in the way of development as an active factor in the boy or girl's psychic make-up. We questioned a number of Santals as to the average age when sexual consciousness of children develops into a factor to be reckoned

4: Biswas D, E-3,4 (1931-1945) 1956
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SANTAL PARGANAS

CHAPTER III

The Santal Social Organization

Family: The family amongst the Santals should be of great interest considering that the Santals have been described as polyandrous. But besides the privileges of the younger brother over an elder brother's wife or the latitude allowed to the husband with the wife's younger sisters, there ought to have been traces of at least what has been called group-marriage. As the Santals could be taken as the representatives of a state of culture preceding the Dravidians in India and so be taken as a type of primitive patriliny, theoretically it should have shown the stages of family life which Morgan has described to be of pre-Aryan type. Linguistically, the Santals belong to what has been called the Austric group and thus would be the westernmost peripheral representatives of what is the Hawaiian type of family in the Pacific. In social structure also as well as in a sort of totemic organization the Santals recall several features of the Australian aboriginals. So an inquiry into the Santal family organization compared with the Hawaiian types or Australian systems or the polyandrous Nair or Tibetan types is necessary.

Types of Family: Amongst the Santal generally two types of family can be seen :

(1) The individual family consisting of father, mother, sons and daughters.

(2) The second consisting of grandfather, grandmother, sons, their wives, daughters (unmarried)

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587 amount. The man and the woman are seated on the ground facing each other. The man takes a flower in his hand, and applying the vermilion to the flower and not direct to the woman's head he places the flower in her hair. Afterwards he places on her arm the iron bangle. As one would expect, widowers are usually anxious to marry again as soon as possible, for they are greatly dependent on the help of the woman in the home and in their fields. In the spring of 1941 I was passing through a village in which a wedding was in progress between a widower and a girl who had been previously married and deserted by her husband. In that year marriages were scarce in the countryside because the previous year's rice crop had been a failure and not many could meet the expenses of a wedding. This bridegroom explained his position to me in these words: "I just had to be married again. My first wife was destroyed last year, and if I have no wife who will help [123] me in the fields? I cannot pay wages for labour." He pointed to the bride and asked me what I thought of her. My comments were, I hope, extremely tactful; he told me: "She is a very strong woman." Most of the women who contract a second marriage have been divorced. Although there is no bar to widow remarriage, widows do not often marry again. One reason is the • [835] existence of a modified form of fraternal polyandry. A woman is permitted to have sexual relations with her husband's younger brother, and in the event of her husband's death it is his younger brother's duty to marry her. Even where the conditions are not favourable to such an arrangement, she is usually welcome to stay on in the home of her late husband. She probably does a good deal more than earn her own keep by her share in the work of the household, and where she has children they belong to the clan and family of her husband and make a bond between her and the rest of the family.

595 Cases of polygamy are rare. The most frequently recognized cause of a polygamous marriage is the absence of children by the first wife. Such a wife may be divorced or leave, but sometimes she prefers to remain with her husband, who takes another wife in order to beget children. The only case known to me where a man had three wives was exceptional in another way, for he was one of the few Santals of the area who was a prosperous landowner-cultivator. In all that has been said the assumption has been 591 made that the family is patrilocal. The only exception to this 583 rule arises when a man has no sons but has daughters. In this event one at least of the daughters remains at her own home after her marriage, and her husband, known as a "house son-in-